

OWGRA's Objection to the Proposed Shisha Lounge

29 March 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

OWGRA (Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association) would like to make the following observations and comments in respect of the planning application by the Osterley Park Hotel for a shisha lounge and we are registering our objection.

We note that there have been two previous applications for this development and change of use, namely:

- P/2017/4497 submitted on 23 October 2017 and refused by the Planning Committee on 21 December 2017.
- P/2018/0765 submitted on 21 February 2018 and withdrawn on 8 March 2018.

In the first instance (23 October 2017) OWGRA submitted comments and raised objections. These remain valid for the current application. The second application (21 February 2018) was withdrawn before we had finalised our position. Nonetheless, we would like to reiterate the following:

THE OSTERLEY PARK HOTEL

The building itself is in the mock-Tudor style with a network of black wooden beams set on a white background. It was built in the 1930s at the time of the development of the Golden Mile on the Great West Road and has been a prominent landmark ever since, from 1947 also serving visitors and passengers to the newly opened London Airport, before the establishment of the first airport hotels. Ownership has since changed several times and the hotel now operates as a bar, restaurant and night club (Terminal 6). The addition of a shisha lounge, if approved, will add a new dimension.

The appearance of the building itself has deteriorated in the last few years in that the black beams were overpainted white, albeit two sides of the building have had the black partially restored. The lead light windows have all been replaced by plain glass encased in what appears to be white PVC. The guttering in places has plant growth and the roof tiles show signs of leakage and staining. Oddly shaped extensions have been added to the building over the years and detract from the hotel's original appearance. Moreover, the advent of the Terminal 6 night club has seen the addition of brown awnings, coloured lights, various signage and a row of lampposts on the front and side boundaries. The boundary wall was rebuilt some years ago in a shoddy fashion with mortaring of a poor standard and a deep gap between the two rows of bricks which is full of weeds, rubbish and other detritus. At the side of the hotel is a container area where rubbish sacks are frequently stacked up in an unsightly and possibly unhygienic manner. Two mature trees were summarily removed from the eastern side of the car park for no apparent reason.

All in all, the former relative attractiveness of this locally-listed building has been noticeably and adversely affected by these changes and events.

THE TERMINAL 6 NIGHT CLUB

This facility operates into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings with attendant noise from loud music, departing customers, and car engines. There have also been instances of anti-social behaviour. Local residents have had good cause to complain, with the result that Hounslow council

officers and the police have been monitoring the situation. The licence review conducted on 6 February 2018 by the LBH Licensing Panel recognised the nuisance and disturbance caused by such behaviour and placed fairly stringent conditions on future operations, if the licence is not to be revoked. It remains to be seen as to how effective these measures will be.

The owners of the hotel have previously operated the glazed annexe to the main building as an Indian Restaurant, a brunch bar and latterly a Brazilian restaurant. It is probably the case that these ventures have not met with the degree of success hoped for thus accounting for the present application to open a shisha lounge. Understandably the owners wish to have a successful commercial operation, if they are to recoup the no doubt considerable financial outlay expended on the complete restyling and refitting of the former public house lounge. Such legitimate expectations should not, however, be at the expense of the local community.

HOUNSLOW COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

It is noted from the Pending Decisions List 15 December 2017 – 02 January 2018 under Osterley & Spring Grove Ward:

Ref. CUCO/2017/00542 764 Great West Road (Osterley Park Hotel) Case Officer Matt Robinson:

Breach: 'The unauthorised installation of internally illuminate signage, lighting and the installation of lamps attached to the front and side boundary wall of a public house'.

Proposed remedy: - Remove the internally illuminated signage and lighting

- Remove the canopies and signage installed below the first floor windows
- Remove the lamps attached to the front and side boundary wall
- Remove the resultant debris

Reasoning: THE SIGNAGE, LIGHTING, CANOPIES AND LAMPS ALL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THIS PROMINENT PUBLIC HOUSE. THEREFORE, THE DEVELOPMENT IS CONTRARY TO LOCAL PLAN POLICIES CC1, CC2, CC5, EQ6. (our capitals).

Conversely:

Pending Decisions List 23 February – 02 March 2018.

Ref. 00505/AH/P17 764 Great West Road (Osterley Park Hotel) Case Office Adam Ali:

Summary of reasons for APPROVAL (our capitals)

- THE AWNINGS, SIGNS AND LAMPPOSTS ARE ACCEPTABLE AND CAUSE NO HARM TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING.
- THE COLOURED LIGHTS ABOVE THE AWNINGS ARE NOT PART OF THE APPLICATION, BUT THEIR REMOVAL CAN BE REQUIRED BY PLANNING CONDITION IF CONSIDERED INTRUSIVE. (our capitals).

How is it that two officers of the same department have such opposing views? Is this consistent with planning policy? Surely an explanation is required.

PROPOSED OPERATION OF THE SHISHA LOUNGE

There is insufficient information given in the application with regard to the proposed operation of the shisha lounge. The following require answers:

- What area would the shisha lounge occupy?
- What would be the capacity in terms of numbers of smokers?
- How many shisha pipes are proposed?
- At what times would the shisha lounge operate i.e. opening and closing times and on which days?
- Would the allocated space meet current legislative requirements?

HEALTH ISSUES

It is not for a residents' association to pronounce upon lifestyle and health issues. That must surely be up to the individual. Nonetheless there is evidence from reputable bodies such as the World Health Organisation and the British Heart Foundation that shisha smoking, whether of tobacco or herbal substances, has similarly adverse health effects to smoking cigarettes. Indeed, a typical shisha session may last between 45 mins to an hour and produces more tar, more carbon monoxide and more nicotine than a single cigarette. It is maintained that shisha smoking is associated with many types of cancer. This also applies to herbal substances, the only difference being the lack of nicotine compared to tobacco shisha.

Shisha smoking establishments are governed by various rules and regulations and must be licensed. The Borough of Hounslow already has shisha lounges and thus the respective authorities must have granted the applicable licences. However, as a residents' association we maintain that it is the public duty of a local authority to actively discourage the proliferation of such establishments through active communication of the inherent dangers of such indulgence, in the same manner as the smoking of tobacco is banned in restaurants, public houses, public premises and in some public open areas.

The issue of possible adverse impact on the health of local residents, passers-by and other hotel customers should also be considered, especially on warm nights when windows will be open and the odour and smoke of the shisha activity might be wafted on the breeze. It must also be considered whether the guests of the hotel would be happy to find themselves situated next to a shisha bar in terms of exposure to smoke, odour, noise and possible ASB.

PROXIMITY TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

The proposed location of the shisha lounge at the Osterley Park Hotel would be some 150 to 200 metres distant from the new Nishkam School due to open to pupils between the ages of 5 to 18 in September 2018. Moreover, pupils from the Isleworth & Syon School for Boys, a short distance away, frequently pass the hotel on their way to Tesco at lunchtime or to/from home. The same may be said of the pupils who will ultimately attend the new Bolder Academy in Syon Lane. There is also anecdotal evidence that a shisha lounge might attract the 'wrong' type of clientele i.e. drug dealers. Drug dealing is already an issue in the area, especially Braybourne Drive and 120 Wood Lane, which are very close to the Osterley Park Hotel and the future Nishkam School. We do not think the establishment of a shisha lounge will present a good example to these young people and indeed could provide temptation. We understand that the principals of these three schools will be lodging their own views and comments on this application.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

There are extensive legislative requirements for the operation of a shisha lounge. How would this application comply with these, namely:

- Smokefree legislation (Health Act 2006)
- Fire safety (The Regulatory Reform Order 2005)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Licensing Act 2003.
- Trading Standards regulations.
- Consumer Protection Act 1987.
- Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1981.
- Trade Marks Act `1994.
- Tobacco Products Labelling (Safety) Regulations 1991.
- Planning (Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- The Building Act 1984.
- HMRC (Tobacco Products Duty Act 1979).

CONCLUSION

On balance, OWGRA is of the view that the establishment of a shisha lounge at the Osterley Park Hotel is not compatible in a totally residential area neither is it at all desirable given the proximity of ultimately three local schools.

We submit a petition signed by 92 local residents calling for the application to be refused.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Stryjak
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